

Struggling Unity of Genuine Left and Democratic Forces—Real bulwark Against Authoritarianism

Although the results of the recent parliamentary by-elections do not presage immediate fall or disintegration of the Central Government, their implications have important bearing on the class-politics of the present political situation in the country. Mrs. Indira Gandhi has won her contest at Chikmagalur by-election by a considerable margin of votes. Though her party lost to the Janata Party at the Samastipur and Fatehpur by-elections, the much reduced margins of defeat compared to the last Lok Sabha polls indicate a substantial gain in votes by the Congress (I) in these constituencies too.

So, the question is bound to arise as to how it is possible for Mrs. Gandhi, after being thoroughly condemned and rejected only nearly two years back at the last Lok Sabha polls and after her own ignominious defeat at that time, to re-emerge on the political scene in such a short time. She did not repent her past misdeeds during her election campaigns. Instead, she had asserted repeatedly that she had not committed any wrong or mistakes in regard to the principal political measures during the Emergency—only that there might have been some faults here and there. Following her victory at Chikmagalur, her partymen claimed: "The verdict in favour of Mrs. Gandhi must be taken to mean that the people have rejected (Shah) Commission's findings against her" (Statesman, 12.11.78). In other words, Mrs. Gandhi's

And whether it signifies that the people now approve of the policies and measures she had taken during the Emergency.

Charges of rigging have been levelled by the losing party in each of these by-elections. We have had experience of how rigging is done not only through forcible booth capture, but also by top-level manipulations through various means with the involvement of persons in the higher echelons of administration. Moreover, these by-elections also testify to how nakedly and shamelessly the parliamentary parties are exploiting the communal, caste and various parochial feelings and prejudices among the people in their bid to outdo each other and win elections. Without going into details of the issue as to how these factors play their roles in elections in our country now-a-days, it may be

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Anti-people Educational Policies of the 'Left Front' Government in West Bengal

The 'Left Front' Government in West Bengal has recently announced the introduction of a new policy in the degree course. In bringing about some vital changes in the educational field what had been the procedure of the CPI(M) led Government? When they superseded all the elected bodies of the Universities on the plea of removing corruption and set up a nominated council the government gave an assurance that after a short time elections to form new academic bodies would be conducted which however never materialised.

Instead the nominated Council speedily adopted some proposals for policy changes in the degree course in gross violation of all democratic norms and principles according to which a body which is neither elected by academicians or the educational community but nominated and imposed by the government cannot formulate any education

policy. That policy, especially the proposal to make study of English optional in the degree course caused strong opposition and protest from various academic circles. Protest meetings and demonstrations involving not only intellectuals but people from all walks of life, were organised by the Siksha Sankochan Birodhi O Swadhikar

Raksha Committee. In the face of those stiff opposition and protest the government retraced its steps and agreed to maintain the status quo for one more year, giving an assurance that no change would be introduced without prior discussion and consultation with the educational community. But contrary to their assurance the government has surreptitiously adopted a new policy which in essence consists of those very proposals brought up by the nominated Council at that time. To give a democratic air the government is claiming that all the cabinet has done is to 'approve' some proposals

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CPI(M)'s attack on our Party in Kerala

A lately received news of CPI(M)'s dastardly attack on our Party in Kerala could not be published in this issue. It will come out in the next issue.

victory is sought to be projected as the people's verdict that all she had done during her regime, particularly during the Emergency, were justified. Claims as this no doubt merely reflect the bourgeois parliamentary tactical approach to judging what is right and what is wrong and their attempt to utilize every gain in the parliamentary battle to confuse the people and pass their misdeeds as righteous. Yet the question should be critically examined whether this election victory really absolves Mrs. Gandhi of her crimes.

asserted that the significance of the results of these by-elections, particularly of Mrs. Gandhi's victory, in the context of the cross currents of the present political situation is far deeper. Attributing Mrs. Gandhi's victory to her selecting Chikmagalur as a 'backward' and therefore 'safe' constituency for re-entry into the parliament only means undermining the real political significance of the present situation. Therefore, in the interest of the legitimate democratic mass movements and, above all,

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Jute Workers on Continuous Strike from 5th January 79

Calcutta, December 5: On some of the long-standing demands e.g. reinstatement of retrenched workers, increase in pay scale and dearness allowance payment of house-rent, subsistence allowance to 'Badli' workers, gratuity at the rate of fifteen days' wage per year of service among others and against the Indian Jute Mills Association's adamant and governments' indifferent attitude towards meeting these legitimate demands two lakhs jute workers in the state under the joint leadership of all the Central Trade Unions AITUC, INTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), HMS, BMS, NFITU and others decided in favour of organising indefinite strike in jute industry in West Bengal from 5th January '79. Earlier the above six Central Trade Unions without CITU had jointly called the strike as CITU consistently kept aloof from the movement but later on, after much request and persuasions, CITU leadership changed its stand and decided to take part in the joint movement and strike of the jute workers. This is an important development in the united movement of the workers in the state.

In this connection the role of the governments and trade union wings of the constituents of the 'Left Front' in West Bengal, particularly of CITU deserves mention.

As is known to all, with the direct and indirect support and protection from the last Congress regime the jute mill owners in the country have been although reaping enormous profit but without meeting the long standing just demands of the workers. After installation of the Janata Government at the Centre and

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Defeat Reactionary Caste Politics—

Forge unity of the working people Against Capitalist Exploitation

"... Capitalism, while for the sake of national integration and formation of the nation at a certain stage of its development, tried to unify different communities of people in a given territory also tries at a different stage of development i.e. in the imperialist stage to disrupt the unity of the people for its own security against popular uprising. The more acute its crisis becomes resulting in more intense struggle by the working people against capitalist order, the more fascist capitalism becomes when it tries to fan religious, racial or different parochial sentiments of the people to mislead popular struggle against capitalism"—Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, most beloved and revered founder General Secretary of our party and the great teacher of the proletariat uttered this note of caution, some fourteen years back, to the left and democratic forces in our country and urged upon them to take up with all seriousness and sense of urgency the task of democratization of the society through socio-cultural movement on the firm basis of proletarian ethics with day-to-day struggles of the masses on democratic issues and demands.

Analysing the concrete socio-political situation of the country and outlining the urgent task before the left and democratic forces, Comrade Ghosh has shown, first, because of the reformist—oppositional role of the national bourgeoisie who was in the leadership, the national freedom movement ended in a 'half-baked and truncated' manner. So far as the political task of the stage of revolution is concerned, it was accomplished and the state power passed on from the British imperialists to a new class, the Indian national bourgeoisie and India became a sovereign national bourgeois state; secondly, but the most important task of democratization of the society by removing the barriers of caste, communal, racial and other parochial prejudices and mental make ups within the masses, still remains incomplete because of the compromising role of the national bourgeoisie and basically reactionary character of the class in the historic perspective of moribund stage of capitalism as a world system; thirdly, the unfinished task of democratization of the society cannot therefore be left at the

hands of the reactionary bourgeois class to accomplish because historically not only it is no longer capable of performing it but in defence of its class rule, it will surely and inevitably try to utilise this divisiveness to its advantage. From a fascist design the bourgeoisie will try to fan up these backward feelings and sentiments to bring disarray and division in the working class movement and united struggle against the capitalist class exploitation. Fourthly, therefore this unfinished task of the national movement of making India one and united socially, culturally alongside becoming politically one and united which it has already become, devolves on the working class in this new phase of social development. But only those can be in the van of this movement who have themselves freed from the mental mould and patterning of the old society, stand truly for the secular and democratic values and ideas to gain ground and stand firmly by the side of the struggles of the oppressed masses against capitalist oppression; fifthly, crushed by the mounting capitalist oppression, the

rural labourers, sharecroppers and the destitute peasants in the countryside are being drawn more and more to sharp class struggle against not only the big landlords but also the rich peasants. The social democratic parties who show their only interest in anyhow coming to governmental power to defend and serve the moribund capitalist order are siding with the jotedars, rich peasants and rural vested interest for election politics, are discouraging the class struggle to develop and take firmer roots, holding out reformist solutions to the basic problems of bourgeois society and all this they are doing under cover of their fanciful theories of revolution that give a so-called theoretical garb to their defence for the capitalist order.

The task is therefore left to the oppressed working people and genuine democratic forces in the country to unite under the leadership of the real revolutionary party of the proletariat to combine the social-cultural movement on a new and higher ethics that must precede the working class revolution, with the day-to-day democratic struggle of the oppressed people. On default of this historic task, the working people will have to pay the penalty in terms of disarray and dissensions within their own ranks to the glee of the exploiters.

Today, the heinous conspiracy of the bourgeoisie, enmeshed in deep crisis, against the oppressed people is wide open. The absence of a strong wave of left and democratic movement to channelise the struggles of the working people to the historic course of class struggle against the capitalist class exploitation, the unfinished task of democratization of society keeping the breeding ground of caste, communal, racial prejudices

among the masses which being deliberately mixed up with the class exploitation adds complexity to the situation, the utter helplessness of the poor people in a steadily worsening economic situation of crisis-ridden capitalist economy together with the reactionary and opportunist parliamentary politics of the bourgeois and social democratic parties as also the nasty roles of the bourgeois administration and the press, all combined have made the oppressed people easy victims to parochial feelings and sentiments. The bourgeoisie is reaping the rich harvests of communal and caste riots or strife between the poor people, relegating to the background the militant class struggle of the oppressed against the capitalist class exploitation which it fears most.

As a result what was once a blot on the national conscience has assumed the dimension of a hydra-headed monster. From January to July this year, the number of communal incidents recorded was 137 against 121 in the corresponding period last year. Persecution of Scheduled-castes rose from 5,968 in 1976 to 10,879 in 1977 and in the first eight months of 1978, the number recorded stood at 5,952. The issue is therefore no longer of local or regional affair but has assumed national dimension.

The left and democratic parties and forces owe positive answers to the working people and the country. Will they remain silent spectators to this sorry pass in the democratic orientation of the struggles of the masses? Do they feel that they have a solemn duty of saving the oppressed masses from the tentacles of utterly reactionary and filthy bourgeois politics by offering a definite political-ideological leadership as also an instrument of struggle in the shape of a left and democratic front or be witness to this dangerous drift in the

country's politics? The logic of history unmistakably points out that any equivocation or studied silence on the question of forging this all-important unity of the democratic forces at this juncture means to subserve the bourgeois class interest and a shameful treachery to the cause of the working class movement.

Role of the principal bourgeois parties

In a bourgeois parliamentary democracy like that in our country where the basis of political campaigning whether at the time of poll or not should be the general socio-economic-political issues and programmes, is being observed to shift to casteist or communal appeals. Elections are being contested by the principal bourgeois parties. Congress (I) and Janata Party inciting caste, communal and other parochial feelings and sentiments. This is evident from the two recently held parliamentary by-elections—Chikmagalur and Samastipur. Both these parties, in the two elections relied on bloc voting on caste lines and conducted their election campaigning accordingly. Not only this, the entire government administration and the government exchequer were put to perverse use in favour of the contesting parties or for bribing the electorates by way of announcement of special concessions to particular sections of the electorates. This makes a mockery of a 'free and fair' poll. Take for example in Chikmagalur from where Indira Gandhi was staging a come back in the parliament. Here, the AIADMK ministers from the neighbouring State Tamilnadu were requisitioned to campaign for her to the Tamil voters. In similar fashion, Muslim leaders came for the Muslim voters, Telugu speaking leaders for the Telugu voters. What a fine process of national integration she is never tired of pleading for and claiming for its achievements! This was

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Crisis-ridden bourgeoisie are setting one section of the oppressed people against the other on caste and communal lines to break the unity of their movement against class exploitation

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not all, apart from elaborate arrangement for liquor and money, the voters of Lingayats and Vokkaligas were ensured by offering concessions from the government. Even a state minister who was the chairman of a government appointed commission which omitted Lingayats from those who would get special concessions, moved round the Lingayat voters to assure them that if judicial pronouncement does not stand as a bar then they too would get the special benefit. This is the specimen of a free and fair election in this country which claims to be "World's largest practising democracy"!

Just as in Chikmagalur so also in Samastipur, the Janata Party-run State Government announced on the eve of the by-election, the 'job reservation' policy for the 'backward' castes and communities that even divided its own house. The whole election atmosphere was surcharged with Caste feelings and tensions. One journalist writes very candidly (Business Standard, Dec, 1, '78, "Lessons of Samastipur"):

"...This time...it was evident that the forward castes went to the side of the Congress (I) and the backward castes by the side of the Janata. The reason for this primarily was the job reservation policy".

He also hints at probable backlash of this caste tension particularly after the defeat of the candidate of the 'forward' castes who generally belong to dominant class in the rural side, in the shape of reprisals against the poor people of 'backward' castes both by way of physical tortures and pressures on economic front. The journalist also records his own experience after a tour of the constituency. High officials generally belonging to 'forward' castes fear reprisals from the Chief Minister and his

cabinet for their involvement in election thereby giving indirect admission of the involvement of the administration in election on caste lines. Wonderful election indeed!

Without going deeper into the problem, this journalist has drawn a conclusion of his own which is interesting to read:

"...The Samastipur election must go as a warning that by charging the electorate with caste feelings on the eve of a by-election, the Janata can win one seat. But in a general election, it will be the dominant caste which will rule the roast. The lesson of Samastipur is that no shortcut and desperate attempt to remove social disparity that is by way of formula like reservation of jobs would be a wise move on the part of the Janata Party unless the economic disparity is removed through a long term programme."

Need we to remind the journalist that both for Congress (I) and the Janata there is no fixed social alignment, somewhere Indira Gandhi will be the champion of the Harijans, somewhere Janata Party would try to outbid her but one thing remains common in that both of them are fighting elections purely on caste or communal lines so as to divide the ranks of the oppressed people in a bid to put obstacles to working class unity and development of class struggle against capitalist exploitation.

Some concrete instances of organised violence—counter-revolutionary class offensives coming in the open

Let us take up a few concrete instances of organised violence of the 'higher' castes against the oppressed castes and communities. Deeper down the crust of casteist prejudice, jealousy and

rivalry in the socio-economic plane which still remain as divisive force and adds to the complexity as the hangover of the feudal past in the superstructure, we find certain definite socio-economic developments born out of the moribund capitalist order. We are to remember that reactionary force at every stage of social development, more often than not, make use of the non-rational and obsolete values in culture that remain as hangover of the old society as weapons for their own class purpose as also a camouflage for their class exploitation. That is why we are to go deeper down the form to have a correct appraisal of the social reality. We are to know that capitalist law of production i.e. its rule of exploitation always and everywhere adjusts to productive form even of the old society. This is particularly true in rural economy. Equally it is true in the realm of culture when capitalism has reached its moribund stage. **Comrade Shibdas Ghosh**, has shown in his integrated and comprehensive analysis of fascism that has appeared as the general characteristic feature of moribund capitalism in all capitalist societies in the post world war situation that fascism is a "queer amalgum of spiritualism with science". It is falling back upon obscurantism, religious fad, regimentation of thoughts and all backward sentiments to stem the tide of militant movements of the oppressed masses and is only taking the technical aspect of science, discouraging the logical bent of mind to develop in the people.

These fascist devices underscore the importance of democratic movement to come speedily to the side of the people integrating with it the socio-cultural movement back the fascist conspiracy. However let us recount the

experiences in brief.

Villapuram Atrocity

Villapuram, located in the heart of South Arcot District of Tamilnadu, an important market town on the National Highway 45 was the spot of gruesome atrocity on the 'Harijans' that took a toll of 12 lives including a boy of 12 and a woman of 35, in broad daylight with the police and administrative machinery seemed to be paralysed. The occasion was the indignity suffered by a young Harijan woman and a good dressing down given to the miscreant by seven youngmen of the Periya Colony the dwelling place of 3000 Scheduled caste poor working people. The immediate reaction was the organised offensive under the leadership of P. Krishnan, the local AIADMK MLA and other AIADMK leaders one of whom K. K. Annamalai, is the President of Vegetable Marchant's Association that gave a call of hartal the next day. The Merchants' Association chiefs incited and organised hooligans to make a bonfire of the hutments in the Periya Colony. The AIADMK ministry whose partymen are directly involved in this outrage set up the Sada Sivam Commission of Enquiry just as a fig leaf for its so-called neutrality. Facts of the matter are that although Krishnan and other AIADMK local leaders have been named as the culprits, no action has been taken against them.

The report of two independent researchers, (Economic and Political Weekly—October 14, '78) shows that the RDO, the DSP and the Circle Inspector of police along with a contingent of no less than a hundred steel-helmeted policemen looked on while the poormen's huts were burning encircled by the invading mob.

They have commented

that at the root of the tension was the growing conflict between the town's dominant economic interests—traders and merchants and the Harijan labourers who weigh and carry goods, drive rickshaws, and do many other odd jobs. The labourers have showed their organisational sense and been able to raise wage rates.

It is however noteworthy that those among the Harijans who have somewhat prospered economically—socially kept aloof from the fight or took a conciliatory attitude towards the high-caste and its merchants' chamber. Secondly, the merchants' chamber and its political spokesmen the AIADMK leaders succeeded in mobilising unemployed youths and poor people of 'forward' castes against the Harijan poor people.

Marathwada—Caste war for ten days

Marathwada comprising three districts—eastern part of Aurangabad, Purbani and Nanded which was a part of the State of Hyderabad during the British period and remained backward was also kept separated from the rest of Maharashtra as also from the Satyashodhak movement which grew and developed as an anti-feudal democratic movement in the 19th Century in the state. It was the place that witnessed an organised caste riot for ten days covering wide areas deep into the villages like of which, the state has never seen in the past. The occasion was on the renaming of Marathwada University (Aurangabad) after Ambedkar, a hallowed name to the Dalits and a demand for which was an old one. Sensing opposition from the upper caste to whom Ambedkar was no better than a 'Mahar' (untouchable) Congress dragged its feet but the new coalition ministry's

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Anti-people Educational Policies of the 'Left Front'

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forwarded by the Universities themselves. Does such a procedure have anything in common with democracy, with democratic norms and principles?

As to the new policy, let us examine the changes in the degree course. A new division of professional studies such as computer programming, industrial physics, community development, farm management etc., has been introduced into the new syllabus, along with inter disciplinary studies which means that students from the art and science stream have to choose now only two subjects from their own stream and are free to choose a third subject from any other stream. Language has been made an optional paper; B.A and B.Sc. students will have to choose one optional language paper on either English, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu or Nepali language as an additional compulsory paper. Pass Marks have been lowered to 20 per cent. The commerce students have been exempted from this paper for reasons best known to the government. The CPI(M) led 'Left Front' Government has announced that they would progressively discard grace marks. There can be no two opinions as to the disgrace of grace marks and if the government wants to abolish these it is welcome. However, by lowering the pass marks to 20 percent they have already added 10 percent grace marks in advance; while the marks secured above 20 percent will be added to the aggregate marks obtained in other subjects. Thus, in reality they have admitted grace marks in a dual way through the backdoor.

For a long time emphasis on the study of language, especially study of English has diminished resulting in a considerable lowering of standard in our education. The attitude of the 'Left Front' Government towards language reflected in its new policy denigrates language even

more which would cause serious damage because language is not just a subject like any other; but is the vehicle of thought. Mastery over language is necessary in order to attain mastery over a subject. Without a command over language a student can neither study any subject nor properly express its content. Thus language is not merely a subject like others but the base of other subjects. To deny the importance of language amounts in reality to discourage the study of language. This will equally lead to neglect of the study of literature which is a must if language is to be mastered. It is known to all that human values and ethics and the finer sentiments like affection, sympathy, compassion and kindness are acquired through the medium of literature. By neglecting the study of literature they want to divorce and uproot people from values and ethics in order to destroy their morality and character and convert our Universities into centres which turn out technically skilled workmen only.

The argument which the University Council had put forward in justifying proposals for inter-disciplinary studies were that this would soften the rigid barrier between science and art stream, promote interest in employment oriented courses and since the students were free to choose the subjects which are interesting and useful to them, genuine interest in education would be generated among the people. Until now each student in the degree course had to choose the three subjects in the own stream in such a way that two of these would complement the studies in the main subject and thus help to get a better grasp and comprehension over the main subject. What the government proposes to encourage in the name of enhancing broadness of knowledge and generating more interest is nothing but complete anarchy, especially in our present education system where separation into different

streams starts at higher secondary level and a student does not have the necessary background and foundation for inter disciplinary studies. Apart from the question of being unrealistic it is not only academically unsound but positively harmful, it will weaken comprehension of the students; prevent them from acquiring a co-ordinated aspect of knowledge; carrying the harmful trend of compartmentalisation to a far more advanced stage. So what the government is doing in the name of reforms is nothing but the worst type of new experiments; hitting at the very base of higher education which will lead to further chaos and deterioration in our education system. Since Congress regime upto now one after another new experiment has been carried out in the educational field in the name of reform; converting the students practically into mere guinea pigs and making their studies and life miserable. Again the students and parents will be the worst sufferers from these new experiments forced on them by the 'Left Front' Government.

Whatever be the arguments put forward by the CPI(M) led 'Left Front' Government, this new policy is a sinister design to restrict higher education both in quality and quantity. Ours is a capitalist country in the grips of all out acute economic, political and cultural crisis, and the rising unemployment is taking ever more menacing proportions. The capitalist class is unable to provide the students opting for higher education with jobs. The ruling bourgeoisie know it well what grave danger to their class rule arises from a large community of educated unemployed equipped with a comprehensive knowledge and a scientific, critical and analytical mind. Such people cannot be fooled so easily about the root cause of their crisis which lies in the exploitative capitalist system itself. Thus in

every way and by every means they try to reduce the number of educated unemployed on the one hand and strike at the very root of education on the other by fostering the trend of compartmentalisation and imposing the quality of education in all possible ways. CPI(M) which is competing for the favours of the ruling capitalist class with the other bourgeois parties in its bid to appear as third alternative in the two party parliamentary system introduced in our country is not only accomplishing the 'unaccomplished tasks' of the previous Congress regime in the educational field but advancing one step further, to secure the interests of reactionary ruling class. Congress regime through seat restrictions and various measures openly tried to

divert a large section of students away from higher University education to vocational trainings where only some technical skill is imparted to the students in order to prepare them for self employment schemes. CPI(M) is trying to do exactly the same surreptitiously and within the field of University education itself; striking at the very root of higher education. Congress regime raised the slogan for a abolition of English language for a long time but was unable to do so because of the stiff opposition from academic circles and the public. But where Congress failed CPI(M) succeeded under the screen of left verbiage.

We urge teachers, students and parents and all democratic minded people to come forward in strong protest to foil these sinister designs of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie projecting Mrs. Gandhi as the effective alternative to the Janata party

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in the interest of the revolutionary struggle of the masses in our country, it is imperative to realize the real political significance of these elections.

Anybody who had carefully noted how the Janata Party was formed, quickly after announcement of the last Lok Sabha polls, with all-out support and patronage from a large section of the ruling bourgeois class and how almost exclusive publicity was given to it in the monopoly controlled Press, cannot but agree that during the last Lok Sabha polls the ruling class, in the face of the unprecedented outbursts of mass anger against Mrs. Gandhi's regime, had projected the Janata Party as an alternative to the Congress, in order to divert the mass discontent into the parliamentary channel so that it might not take an anti-capitalist turn. In this way, the ruling class had conspired to introduce the two-party system in this country with the sole object of stemming the growing tide of

revolutionary movements and giving a fresh lease of life to the crisis-ridden capitalist system by confining the legitimate democratic mass movements within the ambit of parliamentary politics. It was seen during the recent parliamentary by-elections that the bourgeois Press had been blowing up these elections as a keen tussle between the Janata Party and the Congress (I). Everybody knows that the mass media in our country are entirely monopoly controlled and that these media are trying to shape and channelise the public opinion in accordance with the interests of the monopolists. The nature of publicity given in the bourgeois Press to the Janata and the Congress (I) makes it amply clear that the bourgeoisie wants at present to shape out the public opinion in such a fashion that the people are led to believe that their choice has to be confined to one of these two parties only on the all India plane.

The Central Committee of our Party had cautioned (Contd. to Page 5)

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the people, on the eve of the last Lok Sabha polls and on many succeeding occasions, about this bourgeois conspiracy to install the two-party system in our country. Our Party has also been pointing out all along that the rise of authoritarianism does not depend on the personal wishes or designs of an individual or a party. This question can be examined correctly only from the class point of view. In the present era, when the crisis-ridden capitalism has become thoroughly reactionary internationally and is incapable of solving any of the basic problems gripping people's life, the bourgeoisie in each capitalist country—whether developed or underdeveloped—is bound to have an ever-increasing tendency towards authoritarianism and fascism in the aggregate interest of capitalism. Our country is not excepted. When Indira Gandhi was in power she had trampled all democratic norms and had ultimately clamped a one-party authoritarian rule during the Emergency, although under the facade of parliamentary democracy. And what about the bourgeois alternative, the Janata Party, at present entrusted with the job of running the Government in the aggregate interest of the ruling class? Is it not trampling the democratic rights of the people every moment while mouthing slogans of democracy and maintaining the parliamentary facade? In the last one year or so, its Governments resorted to firing on legitimate democratic mass movements and mass-killing at several places including Panthnagar, Kanpur and Bailadilla.

Its election promise to undo the most heinous misdeed of Mrs. Gandhi during the Emergency, the 42nd Constitution Amendment—has ended up in the 44th Constitution Amendment which retains, as its basic feature, the most anti-democratic, anti-people provision of preventive detention and the provisions for imposition of internal Emergency

The slogan of 'third alternative' of both CPI(M) and CPI is nothing but an electoral manoeuvre within the ambit of bourgeois two-party system

in any part of the country on the plea of threat to law and order. And now it has brought up the most anti-democratic authoritarian Industrial Relations Bill seeking to take away the fundamental democratic rights of the working class. Are these instances of defence of democracy or of practice of authoritarianism under cover of democratic phrase mongering?

All this proves that whoever goes to defend the present crisis-ridden capitalist system is bound to develop authoritarian character and cannot give the people back the little democratic rights they used to enjoy earlier even in the bourgeois sense. It has to be understood therefore that the question of struggle against authoritarianism is inalienably linked with the question of struggle against capitalism. Unless the struggle is conducted from the correct class point of view, one authoritarian force may replace another such force, but the phenomenon will continue to thrive ever more menacingly. It is not difficult to follow that the ruling class feels it a practical necessity to project Mrs. Gandhi as the effective alternative to the Janata Party because of the quick decline of the image of the latter. But the bungling of the Janata Government in prosecuting Mrs. Gandhi for her crimes has also helped in a way her re-emergence. Although the major offence of Mrs. Gandhi is political in nature, the Janata Government turned the whole into a legalistic issue and committed her to trial on charges of purely administrative malpractices on the basis of the reports of some inquiry commissions, instead of exposing before the public the real character of her autocratic rule and her malpractices and prosecuting her for her political crime by mobilising the public opinion on the political level. We may, therefore,

come to certain conclusions. First, although individuals do and may play important role but most important is to wage a relentless struggle against the very class whose politics these individuals represent and defend. Secondly, Mrs. Gandhi's crime should be fought against politically because it is a political crime against the people perpetrating a most heinous, hated and fascistic design by ruthlessly suppressing their legitimate democratic rights by nakedly utilising her power as Prime Minister. Third, it is preposterous to expect that the bourgeois alternative like the Janata Party defending the crisis-ridden capitalism is any force in the fight against authoritarianism.

Therefore, will it reflect truth only by saying that the failure of the Janata Party to provide the people with even the minimum relief possible in the present capitalist system and the quick exposure of its anti-people character is the cause of the re-emergence of Mrs. Gandhi? The CPI(M) leader, Mr. Promode Das-Gupta, is reported to have held the internal squabbles in the Janata as the reason for Mrs. Gandhi's victory. But is it the principal factor? The CPI(M) says that Mrs. Gandhi's victory poses great danger to the people. The party is crying itself hoarse over the re-emergence of authoritarian forces represented by Mrs. Gandhi and her party. But is it not true that Mrs. Gandhi's re-emergence, backed by a large section of the monopolists to be one prop in their design of the two-party system, has been possible, and in such short time, also because of the absence of the united front of the genuine Left and democratic parties in the country?

Only by developing this front the ruling class's conspiracy to install the two-party system can be foiled and only that way it is possible to forestall and curb the rise of the

authoritarian forces. But while talking about the danger of authoritarianism does the CPI(M) call upon the people to fight against the conspiracy to install the two-party system?

On the Samastipur verdict the party observed that "The people look for a better, progressive, democratic and viable alternative to both the Janata and the Congress (I), but are today compelled to choose one of the two, though reluctantly, in the absence of the alternative". (People's Democracy, Editorial, 3.12.78) The CPI(M) leadership should therefore answer whether or not it is a fact that the ruling class has been conspiring to install and give a concrete shape to the two party system and how the party proposes to fight the authoritarian forces by lending support systematically to 'one of the two'.

So, when the principal and foremost task is to forge unity of the genuine Left and democratic parties and forces, it is vitally important to judge who are these parties and forces today in our country. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our great leader, teacher and guide, pointed out on numerous occasions that there are three tests for judging them. First, these parties and forces must have an anti-imperialist role. Second, even if they may not subscribe to communism, they must not harbour any blind anti-communist bias. Third, they are ready to go to an extent at least in the struggle against the present exploitative capitalist system.

But both the CPI and the CPI(M), when they talk of forming a Left and democratic front, actually mean combining with those parties and forces who have no role in the struggle against capitalism-imperialism and who are anti-communist to the bone—in a word, they include also those parties and forces, fighting against whom, the working class

in our country will have to achieve emancipation. For this reason, in the CPI(M)'s list of Left and democratic parties all have their places—from the AIDMK and the Akali Party to the 'democrats' in the Janata Party and the Congress (I)—except, however, our Party, the SUCI. It is not at all difficult to see, therefore, that the CPI(M)'s proposed Left and Democratic Front is just a parliamentary device calculated to serve the ambition of the party within the ambit of the bourgeois design of the two-party system and that it is by no means a fighting instrument in the hands of the toiling masses to foil that design.

In conducting the struggle against authoritarianism, it is, however important to remember that: although the phenomenon cannot be eliminated completely without overthrowing capitalism, particular forms of it can be effectively fought against and thwarted by developing the united front of the genuine Left and democratic parties and using it as the instrument of struggle. But the CPI and the CPI(M) seem unwilling to see the bourgeois conspiracy to install the two-party system in our country and consequently they are keeping the people in the dark politically about this development. This leaves the ground for re-emergence of the authoritarian forces time and again in the future.

In this connection, the specific roles of these two parties during the recent by-elections should not be lost sight of. The CPI, under its cover of 'neutrality', actually lent its support to Mrs. Gandhi. The CPI(M), on the other hand, openly supported the Janata candidate instead of trying to forge unity among the Left and democratic parties and forces, and set up a candidate as a means to project before the people the genuine Left and democratic alternative. Not only that, it is highly significant that Mr. Namboodiripad, the party's General Secretary, timed

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In absence of united democratic movement the oppressed working people are becoming victim to reactionary caste and communal politics of bourgeois and social-democratic parties

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first act was to change the name. The motive was obvious—to refurbish the 'progressive' image of the Janata party to the 'backward' communities which it thought was not good enough.

According to one report, while a common under current of caste prejudice can not be denied, it would be an over simplification to describe the present agitation as a high caste backlash, pure and simple. The situation is much more complex.

The urban upper middle class has long been nursing grievances against the State Government for the 'step motherly' attitude towards developments in the region compared to Bombay and western Maharashtra. Decision to change the name of the university of the region obviously in favour of the 'backward' communities in preference to universities of poona, Nagpur and Bombay Universities added fuel to the simmering fire of cast jealousies and rivalries. The student community of rural middle class origin already aggrieved at the government's policy of protective discrimination in education and employment in favour of the Scheduled Caste jumped into action, no doubt, inspired secretly by the political forces opposed to present ruling coalition.

Increasing competition for admission to professional institutions and for white-collar jobs has resulted in a crop of unemployed youths among the middle class who and their parents too think in their desperation that the 'privileges' given to the scheduled castes, if not wholly, at least partially are responsible for their present plight. To them the renaming of the university meant a 'further concession' to the scheduled castes. Not only, therefore, it set in motion deep seated cast prejudices and jealousies but also a sense of strong sense of rivalry for the very

limited scope and opportunities for education and employment that this rather stagnant capitalist economy is throwing out to the people, that too, in government departments. This is exactly happening now in Bihar over job-reservation policy of the State Government. At the heart of the Marathwada trouble remains also a acute unemployment problem of the educated unemployed youths who may be educated at the colleges and universities but are yet to get the real political education to see through the game of the exploiters.

Gail Omvedt, another writer with 'Marxist' leaning has pointed out another historic fact.

She writes: 'In Maharashtra... the Satyashodhak movement has been ignored by the Communists throughout the 1920's and 1930's and when it was not ignored it was characterized as based only on 'Communalism' at a time when peasant revolts under Satyashodhak leadership were occurring. Even Ranadive has admitted in his review of my book (Social Scientist March 1978) that none of Maharashtra Communists were moving towards a really revolutionary way of uniting the working class movement with the peasants and anti-caste movements. And yet Bombay was a Centre of early Indian communism. In contrast, an emerging Gandhian leadership proved capable of appealing to the young non-Brahmin radicals and the result was their uneasy absorption in a National Congress controlled by bourgeois leadership.'

Long back, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the outstanding Marxist Thinker of the era and our most revered leader and teacher traced the sad history of the Indian freedom movement being misled and its fruits being

usurped by the Indian bourgeoisie because of the shameful failure of the so-called communist movement in our country under the leadership of undivided CPI where the present top leaders of CPI(M) were all in the leadership. Although the writer gives a factual support to the historic fact of the failure of CPI to establish working class ideological-political leadership in the national freedom movement, she herself suffers from serious confusions over the question as is evident from her vigorous support to caste privileges and benefits to "wipe out castes". This is a product of confused thinking and seems to be shared by considerable section of the intellectuals associated with democratic or even 'communist' movement.

After the Marathwada tragedy, the CPI(M) has suffered a split. The new emerging group under Sharad Patil with the name and style "Satyashodhak Communist Party," and from the statement of Patil to the press (Hindusthan Times 6.12.78) it is evident how the CPI(M) leadership has failed to educate the party with a correct Marxist-Leninist line to this problem of caste and is itself a victim of casteist mental make up and tradition which, unfortunately, this new group also carries. This is also evident from another fact. CPI(M) had to save its face by expelling one of its local leader Baldeo Singh who not only participated but took an active part in a meeting organised by the Jat jotedars to pressurise the Harijan landless labourers in Kanjhawala village, in Delhi. These facts show that although this party bears the 'Marxist' appellation, it is no better than the bourgeois parties in as much as it has no proletarian class approach to and stand on concrete socio-political problems and issues and guides its policies

solely from pragmatic consideration, having an eye to fish in troubled waters to improve its prospects in parliamentary politics.

Andhra Taluks & Bajitpur village in Bihar

Before we pass on to the concluding part let us briefly mention two incidents of 'medieval' torture on the poor villagers as have recently come to light. These have occurred in two states run by Congress (I) and the Janata Party respectively. They rip open the treacheries and hypocrisies of these two parties whose leaders on and often talk about democracy, citizen's rights, plight of Harijans and all that.

In Andhra Pradesh, Jagatyal and Sirisilla Taluks of Karimnagar district were promptly declared as 'disturbed' areas on the representation to the Congress (I) Chief Minister by some seventy landlords who wanted to teach the landless labourers for their movement to raise wages and resist the landlords' atrocities. The areas were declared 'disturbed' under the provisions of the notorious Andhra Pradesh Suppression of Disturbances Act of 1948 which pre-dates the Indian constitution and gives extraordinary powers to police and administration. A veritable reign of terror was let loose on the poor peasants. According to the report of a committee appointed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights, the poor peasants were brutally beaten by police, hundreds of false cases were instituted against the peasant leaders and organisers and even women political workers standing by the side of the poor peasants were raped. The landlords are still all-powerful in the areas and extort money from the poor peasants for allotment of government lands and today licence which they doubly pay—to the

government and to the landlords.

Now about the Janata ruled Bihar. Here also a landlord could raise an army of 400 ruffians and let loose an orgy of violence on each and every 162 families of the poor agricultural labourers in Bajitpur village of Begusarai district. This barbarous organised violence lasted for seven hours during the long hours of which there was no existence of a government, nor was slightest concern of the ministers and the administration for 'law and order' they show for it so much when the oppressed people are on a movement for justice.

Even a bourgeois mouth-piece like the Statesman, wrote editorially: "The fact that the principal accused were granted bail immediately after a formal surrender suggests that they enjoy political patronage. Some of them including the landlord who is the central figure have been evading arrest chiefly because the authorities continue to look the other way.... Mr. Desai's assurance that maximum punishment would be given to the guilty is a statement of good intentions and no more." (December 5, '78 (Italics added)

Faced with criticisms from opposition parties and wide-spread resentments even among its constituents and rank and file, the Prime Minister declared another good intention and nothing more, in the parliament of convening an all party conference over the problem that has been plaguing the country for long and recently being further accentuated by the parties in power whether at the centre or in the states, all defending the capitalist class motives and intentions.

The real face of the problem and the tasks before the left and democratic forces in the country are therefore the moot points which we are to

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sort out by way of summing up the concrete experiences.

The Problem and the tasks before the working class movement

Concrete experiences that we have referred to above, suggest some important points that are to be taken note of for the clarity as also the correct orientation of the struggles of the oppressed people especially in the countryside.

First, capitalist development in agriculture accelerates the pace of proletarianisation and pauperisation of the poor and lower middle peasants, more and more poor and middle peasants are being steadily dispossessed of their tiny patches of land due to poverty. The crisis-ridden almost stagnant capitalist economy fails to absorb the growing army of unemployed in the countryside as also in the cities as not to speak of opening new industries even the already running ones find it more and more difficult to keep the wheels of production moving because of the instability of market. The landless labourers, the sharecroppers as also the destitute peasants, are in ferment against intolerable capitalist exploitation. They try to rise against the landlords, rich peasants traders and merchants in the countryside which this vested capitalist class dreads most. They are trying to bring disarray and divisions in the unity of oppressed people. The absence of democratic movement creates a vacuum which they exploit with counter revolutionary politics. Aided and assisted by the bourgeois and social democratic parties, rural bourgeoisie, divert the wrath and indignation of the poor people somewhere against the 'low' caste, somewhere against the 'high' caste poor people. Instead of being a militant democratic movement of the oppressed against the oppressor class, these struggles are being misled within the oppressed class itself on caste and communal lines. All the

The real strength of the oppressed people lies not in caste or communal privileges but in the strong united democratic movement against capitalist exploitation

election parties who have eye on the support and backing of the rural vested interest for so-called dividend in parliamentary politics are thus not only not backing up and uniting the struggles of the rural poor on class basis but also are skilfully helping the vested interest to drive wedge in the class solidarity of the poor.

Secondly, with the development of capitalist farming, the focus of contradictions in the countryside is shifting from the old type of 'idler' landlords versus poor peasants to a sharp fight between the new generation of rural bourgeoisie, who attend the fields and take keen interest in extracting maximum profits out of them and the landless labourers whom the law of development in the society has made more aware of their rights. The class reality is asserting despite the maze of confusing politics of CPI and CPI(M) to whom this generation of rural bourgeoisie, 'attending fields' are 'progressive'. That is why, this section of rural bourgeoisie who even belong to so-called 'low' or 'middle' castes, just as the non-Brahmin land owners of Kilvenmani in Tamilnadu (massacred 44 Harijan landless peasants in 1968), some of the Yadava and Kurmi jotedars in Bihar, the Jat and Sikh jotedars in Punjab, Haryana, U. P. and M. P. the Maratha sugar cane farmers as also their equivalents in other parts of the country show that they are no less ruthless, no less murderous in their attacks on the landless and destitute peasants, no matter whether they belong or not to the same caste. Not only this, these jotedars have a peasant tradition and they themselves once fought against landlords' oppression, joined in various social and nationalist movements and have an appeal among their own caste. But as is obvious their fight was not impersonal

and once elevated to the class of exploiter their 'conscience' is being guided by their social position. This is the inexorable law of social development which the parties like CPI(M), CPI and the CPI(ML) all try to hide from the oppressed people.

Thirdly, when the issue of concession or 'protective' privileges to the backward communities is thus being exploited by the reactionary politics of the bourgeoisie, there seems to be widespread confusion on the issue among the left and democratic and even the so-called 'Marxist' parties and forces. From the above, it is clear that when the class reality is asserting and reasserting in this bourgeois society, it is of no use turning our back to this reality. Here we quote an extract from the invaluable teachings of **Comrade Shibdas Ghosh** and appeal to the left and democratic parties and forces and even those having 'Marxist' leaning to give a serious thought and pondering over this.

Comrade Ghosh showed: "To one imbued with proletarian class consciousness the fight against the bourgeoisie is impersonal and a class fight. The consciousness of his struggle against the bourgeois system is not born out of the jealousy that he is not rich himself, nor are his struggles on economic and political demands personal in character—these are impersonal. His hatred is against the class—not personally against an individual. If the hatred is personal and not born out of class consciousness, even a worker can be reduced to a bourgeois under favourable circumstances and conditions. Just as it was casteism when the Brahmins exploited so-called low caste Hindus invoking scriptural edicts, so also those who are trying to resist the Brahmins by

inciting the 'low castes' against the former on caste basis are indulging in casteism in the reverse.

"Are these called class struggle by anybody? Only when the workers can transcend the level of consciousness which spontaneously arises out of day to day economic and social movements and become imbued with the revolutionary class consciousness and grasp the Marxist theory of class struggle, the cadres coming from the working class can learn to fight correctly against the bourgeois domination and humiliation of casteism that prevails in our society on the basis of correct impersonal class consciousness and not from any personal malice. Only then would they really understand the class character of caste humiliation within themselves and would try to become communists by a ceaseless struggle against their sense of class humiliation as well."

(Italics added "Why SUCI Is Only Communist Party In India pp. 100-101.)

Fourthly, the principal bourgeois parties both the Janata and Congress (I) are directly fanning up caste and communal frenzies both from their position in government as also outside. On the one hand they are inciting the so-called 'backward' communities to demand more concessions and privileges on caste or communal lines and on the other they are setting the people of the 'forward' communities against these demands as also the people of other communities. Against the growing movement of the landless, share-croppers and destitute peasants not only these parties are applying brutal state machinery but even the rowdies at their payroll. The so-called 'Krishak Sammelan' of Chowdhury Charan Singh-Rajnaraian is organising the jotedars on class basis

and is even drawing the confused poor peasants on caste appeals. Indira Gandhi is also drawing the oppressed rural people of 'backward' communities by her mock sympathies for them that she is using purely for parliamentary politics against the ruling Janata Party.

When the principal bourgeois parties are thus engaged in this utterly reactionary politics, the CPI and CPI(M) guided by parliamentary careerism to become 'third force' within the bourgeois design of two-party democracy are doing the same kind of opportunist politics by backing up the jotedars and rural vested interest although under the smoke screen of pseudo-militant postures. They are also discouraging militant mass struggles of the rural poor and avoiding the all important task of giving a concrete shape to this growing urge of the rural poor for a bold fight against the rural bourgeoisie, by forging a united front of left and democratic parties and forces. We appeal to the rank and file of these parties as also to the rural poor of all castes and communities to ponder deeply and soberly whether or not the demand for reservations on casteist line is really being used by the reactionary forces to weaken the movement of the poor against the oppressors? Should it not be rational and proper to unite under the slogan "Employment for all, priorities to the most needy"? We think, this alone can help the poor people of the 'backward' communities to join in the mainstream of the class of exploited and give a correct orientation to their struggle. We request them to bear in mind that not caste privilege but only in the strength of the democratic movement of the exploited class of all castes and communities against the capitalist class exploitation lie their real strength and the hope for a better future.

The anti-struggle divisive role of CITU as also the pro-employer attitude of the 'Left Front' Government are glaring in jute workers' struggle

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 'Left Front' Government in the state the jute workers expected that these new governments would set necessary pressure on the owners to make them accept the legitimate demands of the workers-employees and would thus encourage and protect the workers to develop united movement for achieving their just cause. The workers particularly expected that the 80 thousand workers retrenched during the Emergency by the employers after imposing higher work load over the working force, would be reinstated. But the tragic experience of the last one year and a half has belied all their expectations. It may be mentioned in this connection that Comrade Fatick Ghosh alone on behalf of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) voiced this demand in the only meeting so far held of the State Labour Advisory Board.

The very policy of compromise and appeasement with the owners in general and IJMA in particular pursued by the 'Left Front' Government of this state, on the contrary, has made the jute barons more audacious and they are now deliberately pushing the workers to the path of movement turning totally a deaf ear to their long standing demands. Three things can be recalled in this regard. Firstly, in jute industry the tripartite agreement between the Indian Jute Mill Associations and workers had expired nearly three years back in '75 but the owners had deliberately avoided to sit with the workers' unions on their fresh charter of demands. The unions had long been pressing hard on the government for convening a tripartite meeting but up till declaration of the proposed strike, for reasons best known to him and his government,

the Labour Minister called no meeting despite repeated requests. Secondly, Sri Raghunath Reddi, the then Central Labour Minister recommended certain benefits for the 'Badli' workers in jute industry which the previous Congress Government in the state did not move to implement. But the strange thing is this that even the 'Left Front' Government followed suit and the jute barons are still in default. Thirdly a few years ago the then state government had set up an enquiry committee, the Bhattacharjya Committee over the widely alleged fraud in calculation of Working Class Consumer Price Index whereby the industrialists were cheating the wage earners of crores of rupees every year. The Congress Government avoided to make the owners including the jute barons implement the findings and recommendations of the Bhattacharjya Committee that gave some little benefits to the workers. But what did this 'Left Front' Government do for this one year and a half? Simply nothing. Besides, there was the question of giving effect to the decision on increased House Rent. Thus with the governments pro-owners attitude and total indifference and callousness towards the workers interest, the workers have been left with no other option than to resort to the path of intense movement and strike struggle.

In such a situation when all the jute workers' unions following the past traditions were taking steps for building up a joint and protracted movement the 'Left Front' Government, on the one hand, with the sole purpose that no such movement was organised and disturb its cordial relation with the monopolists was advising the workers to maintain peace in industry and on the other the loyal

unions led by the constituent parties of the 'Left Front' were trying their best to ensure that no broader unity of the workers could develop and whatever unity had developed already was disrupted. In this regard, the role of CITU, the trade union wing of CPI(M) which is the leading partner of 'Left Front' is all the more condemnable.

Recently on the last 15th November under the auspices of most of the central trade unions a workers' convention was convened at the Muslim Institute Hall, Calcutta for framing up a programme of united movement on the burning issues of the jute workers in the state. Though all jute workers' unions affiliated to the central trade unions like UTUC (Lenin Sarani) AITUC, INTUC, HMS, BMS, and NFITU joined the convention the CITU affiliated unions did not join despite being invited. The convention chalked out a programme of continuous movement from 8th January '79. From this convention, all trade unions present in the meeting jointly invited the CITU to participate in that programme of joint movement and thereby to further strengthen the jute workers unity and struggle. But CITU did not initially respond, rather, on the contrary, when they realised that in any case—whether they join this movement with others or not—the other central trade unions would definitely go ahead with their programme of movement for achieving the legitimate demands of the jute workers it tried to move in different direction to organise a separate meeting with a few central trade unions to create cleavage in the unity already built up and thereby back-stab the whole movement. And

accordingly they issued letters on 19th November to those central trade unions. But UTUC (Lenin Sarani), AITUC, INTUC, HMS, BMS and NFITU in a joint letter dt. 26.11.78 reminded CITU leadership that such a move on their part, that is, calling meeting with some excluding other on the basis of 'pick and choose' clearly exposes their unwillingness to build up joint movement and was merely a manoeuvre to disrupt the unity already achieved. The letter made it clear to the CITU leadership that the unions who had already built up united platform were not going to oblige them and none of them was eager to attend the meeting which the CITU had convened with a motive not calculated to help the struggle. It, however, appealed to the CITU leadership to come forward to ensure success to the united programme of the jute workers by further broadening their unity. As the CITU did not extend their hand of co-operation this time also the central trade unions at last unanimously declared indefinite strike in jute indus-

try from 8th January '79 and requested CITU to participate in the strike. Sensing complete isolation from the joint movement of the jute workers and also the fighting mood of the workers, CITU leadership had to retrace from its earlier stand of frontal opposition to any organised movement in the state for reason now too well known.

So, at a meeting of all the unions on 2nd December, CITU leadership agreed to join the joint movement and strike provided their request to advance the date from 8th to 5th January was accepted by others. This request was accepted and for the sake of broader unity of the jute workers, the date for commencing the indefinite strike was refixed.

The whole background of the unity efforts in jute strike is an important pointer to all those who really want a mighty workers' movement to grow and develop against the mounting onslaughts of the capitalist class. Concrete facts and experiences however unpleasant and shocking they may be are the best teacher and one should take them as such.

Against Authoritarianism

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 the occasion to speak about the authoritarian tendency in the Janata Party. There is of course no doubt about the fact that the Janata too represents authoritarian forces but for the CPI(M), which frequently praises the Janata for its 'democratic' role, to speak about it at a time when the Chikmagalur campaign had reached its high pitch, is indeed of particular significance.

For, who was really helped objectively by it on the occasion? Was it not Mrs. Gandhi? Does it, therefore, mean that the CPI(M) wants to keep open a channel to come to an understanding, if necessary, with the probable new ruling party in the future? Such statements from the CPI(M) leadership perhaps assume greater significance when

viewed against what its leaders had observed on several occasions and at the Jallundhar Congress that the present situation was too fluid and that it might be necessary on that account to join hands with any party, even with Mrs. Gandhi, 'in order to protect democracy'.

The historic task of the people now is to forestall the two-party system. The real need of the hour, therefore, is to build up a united front comprising all the Left and democratic parties and forces to give rebuff to the forces of authoritarianism and fascism. Our Party, the SUCI, has been constantly endeavouring, as the genuine revolutionary working class party, to build up this front as the instrument of struggle of the people. We call upon all forces, whichever Left or democratic party they may belong to, to join forces with us and make this endeavour successful.

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